



Assemblymember

Anna Kelles

Assembly District 125



Dear Neighbors,

A few weeks ago, we celebrated a huge win for future generations when we preserved the Bell Station property on the east shore of Cayuga Lake. Now, we need to rally together once again to save a beautiful and beloved stretch of shoreline along the lake's west shore. Camp Barton is a 138-acre property on Cayuga Lake with 2,200 feet of shoreline that provides outstanding opportunities for public recreation and is vitally important to maintaining the quality of an existing public drinking water source within the fragile ecosystem of the Finger Lakes Watershed.

PETITION TO SAVE CAMP BARTON



Here is the letter I sent today to Governor Hochul urging her to step in once again and help us preserve this place for future generations to enjoy.



THE LEGISLATURE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

December 17, 2021

Dear Governor Hochul:

We are writing to request your timely assistance with the acquisition of a property that provides outstanding opportunities for public recreation and is vitally important to maintaining the quality of an existing public drinking water source within the fragile ecosystem of the Finger Lakes Watershed. Your leadership in saving the Bell Station Property in Lansing, which was celebrated in the region, serves as a shining example of what we hope to accomplish on the opposite shore of the same lake.

The property in question is Camp Barton, a 138-acre property located in the Town of Covert, Seneca County. It features 2,200 feet of level shoreline on Cayuga Lake. The Camp is located on a unique gravel aquifer formation that hosts a well that provides 50% of the water needs for the Village of Trumansburg Public Water System. The site also features a scenic waterfall that is of regional renown, as well as hiking trails, beach areas, and mature hardwood forests.

Camp Barton is owned by the Baden-Powell Boy Scout Council and it is under the imminent threat of sale for development. The scouts seek to raise funds needed for their national bankruptcy settlement and have expressed their intent to proceed with listing the property, or significant portions of it, with a realtor unless an agreement is reached to commit the land to conservation and recreation.

Sale of the camp poses a particular threat due to a combination of factors including the site's attractive shoreline, proximity to Ithaca, and location in the Town of Covert, which has limited land use restrictions. Conversion to residential development would require the addition of numerous septic systems that would threaten the adjacent public drinking water source and add nutrients to Cayuga Lake which already suffers from an historic level of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). This year alone the season for HABs was unnaturally long, extending from June to October with a total of 102 confirmed outbreaks, the highest count of any in the Finger Lakes.

Fortunately, the leadership of the Village of Trumansburg, Town of Covert, and Town of Ulysses have forged a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to manage the site as a lakeside park that will complement nearby Taughannock Falls State Park. The management partnership would be based on a pre-existing recreational partnership between Ulysses and Trumansburg that funds and operates a year-round recreational program.

While these communities are able and willing to manage this site as a public park, they are small communities and lack the financial resources needed to purchase the land. Camp Barton is truly of statewide significance and is worthy of the state's commitment of resources to secure one of the last large stretches of undeveloped shoreline remaining in the Finger Lakes region.

This collaborative approach has been successfully used before in the region – at Camp Onanda in the Town of Canandaigua, Ontario County, and Camp Beechwood in the Town of Sodus, Wayne County. In

both of these cases, New York State acquired these properties and then entered into management agreements with local municipalities to oversee operation of the sites as public parks.

At Camp Barton use of this approach would meet four key state objectives:

- Protection of an existing public drinking water supply that has the capacity for regional expansion to serve a growing population;
- Establishment of additional shoreline park capacity on a lake whose shoreline is 90% privately owned, at a time when nearby Taughannock Falls State Park is increasingly turning away visitors due to capacity limitations;
- Prevention of development on 2,200 feet of sensitive shoreline – limiting nutrient runoff to Cayuga Lake that would exacerbate toxic algal bloom outbreaks.
- Preservation of undeveloped land along State Route 89, a scenic by-way along the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail.

Time is of the essence to save Camp Barton. We respectfully request that you support these municipalities by providing the funds needed to purchase this environmentally valuable property. We hope that you will encourage Erik Kulleseid, Commissioner of the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, to engage the leadership of these local communities, along with Andrew Zepp, Executive Director of the Finger Lakes Land Trust, to develop and implement a strategy to secure the Camp and manage it for the public benefit.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Anna Kelles, Ph.D.
New York State Assemblymember
125th District

Pamela Helming
New York State Senator
54th District

COVID-19 News & Resources

We are all watching the spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 here in New York. While it is concerning, the same tools we have relied on over the course of this pandemic remain the best way to keep yourself and your family safe.

- Please get vaccinated! This is the most important thing you can do to protect yourself and those around you.
- Get a booster shot if you are already fully vaccinated.
- Please follow the statewide mandate to wear a mask indoors.
- Stay home if you are sick and get tested for COVID-19
- Continue to social distance.
- Learn to combat misinformation with this handy toolkit from the US Surgeon General: [A Community Toolkit for Addressing Health Misinformation](#)

Let's work together to protect our communities and limit the spread of COVID-19!

Mask or Vaccine Requirement for Indoor Public Places

Governor Hochul has instituted a temporary mask requirement for indoor public spaces to address the winter surge as COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations rise statewide.

This new measure is **effective Dec. 13, 2021 until Jan. 15, 2022** after which the state will re-evaluate based on current conditions. To protect the health of our communities, businesses and venues must implement a mask requirement or require proof of fully vaccinated status. This action is in line with [CDC recommendations](#) for communities with substantial and high transmission of COVID-19.

[Read the full policy here.](#)

Community Resources

SNAP Benefits for New York Families

SNAP benefits are a lifeline for New York families. New changes include providing a simplified one-page application form, allowing older New Yorkers to recertify their benefits for 36 months instead of 24 months and eliminating the interview requirement for recertification. To learn more about SNAP and apply for benefits, visit: www.otda.ny.gov/programs/snap

SNAP is an essential program that puts food on tables and helps families make ends meet.

Now, New York State is making it easier for older adults and people with disabilities to access **SNAP**.

The Assembly Majority is working to make sure no one goes hungry



A new law allows homeless, elderly and disabled Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to **use their benefits for prepared or hot foods from participating restaurants, delis and grocery stores at reduced prices.**

(Ch. 430 of 2021)

The SNAP Restaurant Meals Program goes into effect on **January 1, 2022.**

Minimum Wage Increase in Upstate New York

Starting Dec. 31, the minimum wage for upstate workers will be increased to \$13.20.



The Assembly Majority will continue to fight to ensure every New York worker earns a livable wage.

The New York State Homeowner Assistance Fund (NYS HAF)

The [New York State Homeowner Assistance Fund \(NYS HAF\)](#) is a federally funded program dedicated to assisting homeowners who are at risk of default, foreclosure or displacement as a result of financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Who can apply?

- Homeowners who are behind or in forbearance on their mortgage
- Homeowners who are in default on a reverse mortgage
- Homeowners who are behind on their property taxes, water or sewage bills
- Homeowners who are behind on monthly maintenance charges

Applications will be accepted beginning **January 3**. This fund is expected to receive significantly more applications than can be funded by the program, so **please gather your materials now and plan to apply early**. For details and application guidelines, please visit this website: <https://www.nyhomeownerfund.org/>



Help for New York Homeowners Affected by COVID is Here

 **NEW YORK**
STATE OF OPPORTUNITY

Homes and Community Renewal

1-844-77-NYHAF
(1-844-776-9423)

New Laws

Polystyrene Foam Ban Effective January 1, 2022

In 2020, New York State adopted the nation's strongest statewide ban of expanded polystyrene, single-use foam food and beverage containers, and polystyrene loose fill packaging materials, commonly known as packing peanuts. This ban, which affects foam containers and loose-fill peanuts, goes into effect January 1, 2021. Exemptions to the law include egg cartons and the white polystyrene trays used by grocery stores to package raw meat and fish.

From the Department of Environmental Conservation:

Polystyrene foam is a concern for people and the environment. Foam packaging is one of the top contributors of environmental litter, causing negative impacts to wildlife, waterways, and other natural resources, as well as littering our communities and natural areas. It is lightweight, breaks apart easily, and does not readily biodegrade. When polystyrene foam ends up as litter in the environment, it can persist for a long time and may also become microplastic pollution. In addition, foam containers and loose fill packaging, such as packing peanuts, are not accepted in most recycling programs in New York

State because the foam is difficult to recycle and has a low value. For these reasons, certain expanded polystyrene foam products will be banned in New York to protect the environment, our communities, and to support sustainable materials management.

For more information: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/120762.html>

Wishing You a Safe and Happy New Year!



As this year draws to a close, I want to take a moment to say a heartfelt thank you to you all! I have so appreciated all of your emails, your phone calls, and your deep investment in your communities during my first year in office. I also want to say a huge thank you to my team for their tireless work this year to serve the 125th district. Is it difficult work and I could not do my job without them! And finally, sending you all my wishes for a safe and Happy New Year from my family to yours.

We will be back in the first week of 2022.

In good health,

Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

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